

G.O Thrones 17

Chapter 17: Inciting Public Wrath

Pointing at the delirious Bart, the Dornish youth sneered, "This knight appears rather unkind to me, and even more discriminatory toward our people of Dorne."

"It's unjust," he continued as his lance sliced off one of Bart's ears. "I've heard it said that the women of the Vale are no better looking than goats. Is there any truth to that?"

"To be frank, I haven't had the pleasure of bedding a woman from the Vale, so I cannot attest to whether they are less attractive than goats," he taunted, delivering a kick to Bart's head. "Hey, Knight of the Vale, what's your take on this? Give me a clue."

Bart, now bleeding and dizzy from multiple wounds, struggled to speak. The Dornish, unfazed, crouched down, seizing Bart by the hair and forcing him upright. "If you have something to say, say it louder," he mocked.

"Cough... you bastard...Dorne..monkey..." Bart managed to cough out between bloody spits, his lips contorted in a feeble attempt at cursing.

Enraged by the filth, the Dornish youth refrained from delivering a swift death. Instead, he subjected Bart to a prolonged torture, using his lance to inflict agonizing wounds upon his limbs, twisting and turning the weapon in flesh and blood.

The torment endured for ten grueling hours until Bart could bear no more. Finally, the tip of the spear pierced his throat, putting an end to his suffering.

"Cursed Dornishmen, you will pay for your sins!" came the enraged cry.

Suddenly, a curse rang out from the seats outside the arena, followed by the sound of an empty wine glass shattering as it collided with the muddy ground.

The profanity acted as a catalyst, inciting more and more spectators to rise from their seats, hurling curses and projectiles at the Dornish youths below.

Wine glasses, apples, plates—anything within reach—became ammunition in the crowd's fury, with even a few women's high heels joining the barrage.

Among the onlookers stood Rhaenyra, her expression impassive as she watched the Dornish youths evade and mock the onslaught from above.

As a princess of the realm, Rhaenyra had never harbored affection for the Dornish people. Furthermore, her mother, Aemma Arryn, hailed from a family that staunchly defended the Vale.

The brazen mistreatment of loyal Vale knights and the mocking of Vale women by the Dornish youth only fueled Rhaenyra's simmering rage.

"Cole, descend and challenge him to a duel. I want him dead," Rhaenyra commanded, turning to her companion.

Cole looked torn. "I am at your service, Princess, and this Dornishman's actions are indeed despicable. But as a member of the Kingsguard, I cannot engage in a duel without the King's orders."

"Then I will find someone who can," Rhaenyra declared dismissively, striding toward Viserys.

Approaching her father, she lowered her voice. "Father, this man's arrogance is intolerable, and he is insulting the realm. I can have Cole challenge him, and justice will be served for Knight Bart's death."

Already irritated, Viserys responded curtly.

Although he acknowledged his daughter's suggestion, Viserys remained composed and advised, "Let us wait a moment. There are many brave knights in the realm, and the Kingsguard must not be overstepped. We should afford the young ones an opportunity to showcase their skills."

Rhaenyra was tempted to argue, but ultimately held her tongue.

The match continued, and Lyonel intervened to quell the crowd's hostility towards the Dornish.

In front of the spectators, the young Dornishman taunted, "The Knights of the Vale are no match for me. Are there any true fighters among you? I seek worthy opponents, not cowards and weaklings."

He chuckled arrogantly, provoking further ire.

"I'll accept your challenge!" declared a middle-aged knight clad in silver-gray armor, stepping forward.

Advancing into the tournament arena with a longsword in hand, he announced in a deep voice, "I am Ser Balot of the Stormlands. Allow me to teach you the importance of respect."

The Dornish youth responded with a playful smile, "Is that so? I look forward to seeing your prowess, Ser Balot."

Meanwhile, in the banquet hall, tables were laden with sumptuous food, and noblewomen engaged in lively conversation reminiscent of a tea party.

Rhaegar sat alone at a table, a plate of pastries before him, leaving a sizable gap where one particular confection rested.

"What are these called?" he mused aloud, referring to the egg-shaped cakes resembling chocolate chip cookies, sweet and chewy.

"These are delightful. Who made them?" Rhaegar exclaimed with raised eyebrows, thoroughly enjoying the treat.

"No, when I return, I must ask Alicent which cook is responsible for these delightful pastries and request them in the future," Rhaegar resolved to himself as he enjoyed his snack.

While he indulged, a stranger suddenly took a seat beside him, placing a plate of chocolate pastries before himself and relishing them with evident pleasure.

Rhaegar's confusion gave way to irritation. "Who is this person helping themselves to my pastries?" he thought, though he refrained from speaking, as there were still several plates left.

Yet, reality taught Rhaegar a valuable lesson: ignoring a source of annoyance only invites further vexation.

As he took a few more bites, the intruder swiftly devoured the remaining pastries, leaving no plate untouched.

"These taste exquisite. A skilled cook indeed," the interloper murmured, swiftly moving on to another plate without awaiting a response.

Plate after plate disappeared in rapid succession, until only one remained.

Unable to endure it any longer, Rhaegar rose from his seat, guarding the last plate of pastries before him, and demanded loudly, "Do you know who I am? How dare you pilfer my pastries? Have you no respect?"

His words rang out with authority, but alas, his youth betrayed him. With his soft voice and increasingly rounded features, he seemed more akin to a child playing make-believe.

The intruder scratched his head in bemusement, offering a sheepish smile. "You are a prince, yes, but aren't these pastries meant for all the guests to enjoy?"

Rhaegar's frustration intensified. "Even knowing I am a prince, you still dare to steal my pastries?"

"You won't even relinquish the last plate to a child, have you no shame?" Rhaegar scolded, his frustration mounting.

"Uh..." the other party faltered.

"There's no age limit when it comes to food. Besides, Prince, you're still young. Too many sweets can lead to cavities," the interloper reasoned.

"You don't get it. Just hand over the pastries. I'm not afraid of cavities," the obstinate intruder insisted.

"You scoundrel! Do you truly think I am a mere toddler to be duped so easily?" Rhaegar exclaimed, pointing an accusing finger.

"Ser, teach this insolent fool a lesson. Let him see the error of his ways," Rhaegar commanded Erryk, his frustration palpable.

Erryk hesitated, reluctant to resort to violence at a banquet. However, seeing the prince's dignity slighted, he knew he had to intervene.

Without drawing his sword, Erryk moved behind the intruder and attempted to restrain him by pressing on his shoulder.

"No, Ser Knight, there seems to be a misunderstanding," the intruder protested.

"I don't care. Anyone who crosses the prince must face the consequences," Erryk retorted, determined to assert the prince's authority.

As Erryk reached out, a swift blow struck the back of his hand, causing him to recoil in pain as a bruise blossomed on his skin.